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**ADDRESS OF WELCOME**

BY PRESIDENT WELLING OF COLUMBIAN UNIVERSITY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: It gives me great pleasure to bid you welcome to the City of Washington; yet I fancy it must seem to you a work of supererogation, or indeed, as Shakespeare would phrase it, "a wasteful and ridiculous excess," if in the name of my colleagues in the Faculty, or in the name of the people of Washington, I assume to bid you welcome to your own Capital, which is more yours than ours. You are all sufficiently versed in the Constitution of the land, to know that the same clause in the Constitution which erects a district of our common country into the seat of the Federal Government, prescribes that it shall be under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Congress of the United States; and in the same breath and to the same extent it makes similar provision for the forts, the dock-yards and the arsenals of the land.

The forts, dock-yards and arsenals are held by soldiers, not for themselves, but for the country, and we denizens of Washington hold this capital, not for ourselves, but for you; and in order that we may perform our function with becoming grace, we are relieved by the Constitution and by our Congress from the burden of all political cares and concerns. Hence it is that we can devote ourselves exclusively to the agreeable task of

furnishing "good society" to the illustrious men whom you send from your States to reside with us for the time being—except perchance during the Christmas holidays, when we sometimes have besides the congenial society of scholars and students, such as I see before me to-night. And, therefore, I can at least presume to welcome you as auxiliaries in this task of "furnishing good society" to the magnates of the land.

I welcome you to this University, and to all its hospitalities. I presume that most of you live in "the quiet and still air of delightful studies" in your own colleges and in your own universities, and I somewhat fear, as you may have looked on our bulletin board, and have seen there that the air of this University during the next few days is to hurtle with learned papers in theology, in dialect, in history, in folk-lore, and in modern languages, that you may conceive you have inadvertently entered into some small section of the Tower of Babel. But I beg you not to be dismayed. If there be any confusion of tongues, it will come from this Society (laughter), because this is a society which represents a multiplicity of tongues and dialects. No, this is not a section of the Tower of Babel. It is rather a section of that "Solomon's House" which so filled the vision and so inflamed the fancy of Lord Bacon when, deploring the segregation of the Universities of Europe, as they lived in their separate cloisters, he looked forward to the day when the learned men connected with them should be gathered into confederation, as was done, he said, in the hierarchies of the church and as was done in the guilds of labor organizations.

What Bacon desired has come, and you are here to lend your co-operation to the other learned organizations which do us the honor to meet within our halls. You are here to create a section in this "House of Solomon" which Bacon said ought to be a house open to "God's first creature, Light, and Light bursting forth from all quarters of the world." We welcome you, then, because we know you come as torch-bearers in this great torch-

race of humanity—because you come to bring your contribution to the light which shall gladden our eyes while you abide with us during the next few days.

I welcome you for your work's sake. You are here as students of language—students of that divine medium, of that ambient, circumambient *menstruum* which holds in solution, as in pellucid amber, the best thought and the best expression of the best minds of the world; and which holds it there on “purpose to a life beyond life,” that is, on purpose to re-vivify and to re-kindle in your souls the thoughts that breathed and the words that burned in the souls of great men who have lived and thought and wrought before us.

Welcoming you as students of language, I welcome you as students of *Modern Languages*; not that I mean, in any words of praise I shall bring to the modern tongues, to utter or to hint one word in dispraise of the ancient tongues of the world. Nor do you wish that I should. In a certain sense and in a very high sense, the language and the literature of the world—the languages and the literatures of the world—when viewed along the lines of linguistic and literary evolution, are all one. Whether it be the literature of Egypt written in hieroglyphs, or whether it be the literature of Assyria written in wedges, whether it be Greek or Roman, whether it be Tuscan or Provençal, whether it be Italian or French or Spanish or German or English, literature, wherever found, is not only the common heritage of our race but its choicest possession. As students of language and students of *Modern Languages*, you are pledged to support this thesis, because the oldest languages of the world in point of time are the youngest in structure, and because the most modern language may be the oldest in point of linguistic maturity, and in point of intellectual content. The maxim of Bacon, *antiquitas sæculi, juvenus mundi*, has made this truth familiar to us all.

I welcome you, then, as students and teachers of the *Modern Languages*, because I am assured that you wish to establish no

line of discrimination against the ancient tongues, and because there is a bond of fellowship and of kinship between all literatures and all languages. But I welcome you the more heartily because I verily believe that you, more clearly than the teachers of ancient tongues, have seized the true principles of education, alike in the matter of literature and in the matter of language; and hence that the long divorce which in so many schools has separated Art from Nature in the instruction of ancient tongues—(a divorce which in separating it from the rule of nature has separated it from the rule of reason and of common sense)—has ended for you. You have seen that it is not only with the eye and with the memory, but also in the use of living speech that we must be inducted into the modern tongues if we would be duly instructed in the modern letters. And so it comes to pass that in doing a good service for your specialty, in doing a good service for modern language and for modern literature, you have done a good service for ancient language and for ancient literature, by bringing back a better method in the instruction of both. You have brought it back in both because you have brought it back in the instruction of those tongues and those literatures of which you are the especial votaries. Therefore it is that I bid you thrice welcome (applause).